

Eight Different Narrative Patterns

If your objective is...	You will need a story that ...	In telling it, you will need to...	Your story will inspire such phrases as ...
Speaking action	Describes how a successful change was implemented in the past, but allows listeners to imagine how it might work in their situation.	Avoid excessive detail that will take the audience's mind off its own challenge	<i>"Just imagine ... "</i> <i>"What if ... "</i>
Communicating who you are	Provides audience-engaging drama and reveals some strength or vulnerability from your past.	Provide meaningful details but also make sure the audience has the time and inclination to hear your story.	<i>"I didn't know that about him!"</i> <i>"Now I see what she's driving at!"</i>
Transmitting values	Feels familiar to the audience and will prompt discussion about the issues raised by the value promoted	Use believable (though perhaps hypothetical).characters and situations, and never forget that the story must be consistent with your own action.	<i>"That's so right!"</i> <i>"Why don't we do that all the time!"</i>
Communicating who the organization is, branding	It is usually told by the product or service itself, or by customer word of mouth	Be sure the organization is actually delivering on the brand promise.	<i>"Wow!", "I'm going to tell my friends about this!"</i>
Fostering collaboration	Movingly recounts a situation that listeners have also experienced and that prompts them to share their own stories about the topic.	Ensure that a set agenda doesn't squelch this swapping of stories – and that you have an action plan ready to tap the energy unleashed by this narrative chain reaction.	<i>"That reminds me of the time that I . . . "</i> <i>"Hey, I've got a story like that."</i>
Taming the grapevine	Highlights, often through the use of gentle humor, some aspect of a rumor that	Avoid the temptation to be mean-spirited and be sure that the rumor is indeed	<i>"No kidding!" "I'd never thought about it like that before!"</i>

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	reveals it to be untrue or unreasonable.	false.	
Sharing knowledge	Focuses on problems and shows, in some detail, how they were corrected, with an explanation of why the solution worked.	Solicit alternative – and possible better – solutions.	<i>“There but for the grace of God ...” “Gosh! We’d better watch out for that in the future!”</i>
Leading people into the future	Evokes the future you want to create without providing excessive detail that will only turn out to be wrong.	Be sure of your storytelling skills. (Otherwise, use a story in which the past can serve as a springboard to the future.)	<i>“When do we start?” “Let’s do it!”</i>

Source: Denning, Steve. *“The Leader’s Guide to Storytelling”*. Used by permission of the author.